



Burt County Board Minutes



OFFICE OF THE BURT COUNTY CLERK
Minutes of the Burt County Board of Supervisors
July 13, 2015
TEKAMAH NE 68061

The Burt County Board of Supervisors met on Monday, July 13, 2015 on the 3rd Floor of the Burt County Courthouse in the Courtroom for a Public Hearing, and following on the 2nd Floor in the Boardroom of the Burt County Courthouse in Tekamah, Nebraska. Notice of the meetings was given in advance thereof by Publication in the Plaindealer, upon a 1st floor bulletin board within the courthouse and on the County's Website. A copy of the proof of publication is on file in the office of the County Clerk. The following members were present: Cliff Morrow, David Schold, Greg Brummond, Matt Connealy, Perry Rogers, Ted Connealy and Gerald Newill.

The meeting opened at 9:00 A.M. upon motion by T.Connealy, seconded by Schold, with roll call vote as follows: Ayes – Morrow, Schold, Brummond, M.Connealy, Rogers, T.Connealy and Newill. Nays-none. Chairman Morrow informed the public that the Nebraska Open Meeting Act was posted on the wall in the County Boardroom on the 2nd floor.

At 9:03 A.M. Chairman Morrow opened the **public hearing regarding Livestock Friendly Designation for Burt County.**

Traci Bruckner with the Center for Rural Affairs spoke in opposition of the Designation stating: the Center feels that the livestock designation supports big Livestock Producers instead of family scale agriculture. The LB 175 Grant actually has no money attached to it. LB 106 could've and would've taken County zoning away. The Center for Rural Affairs wants to work with the County to look for *other ways* to help small, midsize and beginning farmers.

Dale Miller from Lyons representing Burt County Cattlemen. Their organization voted unanimously to support the Designation. They feel it's good for communities, schools and local businesses and it's a great way to tell others to look at Burt County and see what we have to offer.

Emily Skillett with A-FAN (Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska) spoke to support the designation, stating that her organization *supports* large and small livestock operations and feels that they bring value by providing a tax base and jobs that rural acreages cannot.

Sean Connealy does want the Board to support the Livestock Friendly Designation. He feels the designation is used to draw in large corporations and those large corporations won't bring in families or good jobs for local families.

Mark Blackford, manages Craig Cattle Co came to speak FOR the Designation. It's a way to advertise for more coming into the County, it's good to promote livestock because it's a good fit for all other surrounding industries. Craig Cattle is the largest feedyard in the County,



Burt County Board Minutes



they provide several local families good jobs and those families can benefit from those good paying jobs, they spend their money locally. The designation is good for the customers (local farmers) of the Feedyards, the local farmers bring in their grain to the feedyards, they don't have to spend time and money hauling their grain for distances. Mark feels the Livestock Friendly is a good initiative because it invites people to our County, and with local zoning our County retains the power to decide what operations can come in.

Graham Christensen, he is under the impression that we don't need the livestock friendly method to promote livestock. He wants to see analysis/study to show the designation helps with net increases in farms, economic net gains. There is no such study to prove the increases come. He presented the Board with a packet containing several letters/resolutions from various Nebraska Counties expressing their concerns/opposition of LB 754. He used an example from Wayne Co. getting big dairies, coming from California dairies that are going dry, coming to our area using up our water supplies, they don't create jobs and opportunities for the young, local guys. He asks that we find other ways to get young folks into livestock, don't use the Livestock Friendly Designation that has shown no gain. He feels the designation just opens up risk. You don't need the designation, the County has good policies with our Zoning and the County can promote itself.

Victor Jensen, says our county is not livestock friendly at the present time; we have no place to buy feed, we have no fences to be able to drive our livestock from point a to point b and the local producers put out 'bad feed' meaning nothing that's not genetically modified. There are things we can do to become livestock friendly, start a new coop and provide good feed. Zoning would change with the livestock friendly; because the designation's zoning doesn't match up with our setbacks, the public hearings are not necessary so your local input goes away. Part of the designation process is to gather local maps/grids to look at where large operations can go within your County, the place to start is to take a step back and first look at that information. If you want to keep local control, you have to change your zoning maps so that the Public Hearings would still be needed, otherwise the livestock friendly eliminates some of the steps of the local approvals.

Dennis Fleischman representing Burt Co. Farm Bureau. They support the Livestock Friendly Designation as an economical tool to help the County, the sign is a Welcome sign out and the County still has control. Personal note, the presence of livestock in the County says that we are livestock friendly. We need to stop the arguments about big corporations – vs- small farms benefitting from this, the sign is a welcome sign for all to benefit. With so many surrounding Counties having the sign at their borders, we want to appear just as welcoming and friendly. Use the sign for our advantage, we still retain our control.

Steve Martin, works for the Department of Ag. and is the administrator of the Livestock Friendly Program. He touched on a few points: the Designation does not take away your local zoning control or change your process. All the Program does is evaluate your practices and determines if they are friendly/fair in regards to the livestock industry. The LB 106 aspect is a voluntary part of the program, you don't have to abide by that. Just to be clear, it does not impact your zoning, it is only an evaluation of what you do. In using the Program, you recruit and pursue what you want in your County. Whether big –vs-



Burt County Board Minutes



small, the State works with anybody, so you aren't necessarily only drawing in big with the Designation. Any business you may draw in from the Designation can only help your local families/business.

Matt Connealy expressed concerns about what's to come from the Legislation within the Livestock Friendly Program. He's concerned and feels that the Dept. of Ag will keep pushing to change the matrix of the Livestock Friendly Program, in turn some control taking away from the County.

Steve Martin stated that this is a County Program, meant to allow Counties to use the Program to recruit what they wish with it. You as a County can always remove yourself from the Program.

Dave Schold asked about Grants available through the Program. Steve Martin explained about 2 grants through LB 175, currently there's no money. He expressed the importance of not doing this for the money, do it for the Economic Development benefits.

Traci Bruckner responded that the big dairies in Wayne Co that got brought in through the Program have not been beneficial. They've had no benefits from the workers because the workers are low paid and not able to contribute to the community. The air quality is bad and that could hinder your growth because families will flee due to the air quality. These are points she wanted to make to caution the Board, she stated 'be people and farmer friendly, not livestock friendly'.

Kim Connealy asked why Burt County had first set up zoning.... She stated that she believes that the County originally wanted zoning in order to keep large confinements out of our County, for more control and less government. Don't invite this in and remember we have zoning for local control.

Mark Blackford asked was the goal was to keep the livestock operations out, or was it to have control of where those were located?

Dale Miller feels zoning was to protect the farmers and livestock people that were here, so that people couldn't come in and build a fancy house across from an existing large livestock operation and then turn around and sue them and shut them down. The zoning was not to keep out, but to have control in order to protect what is already there.

Vic Jensen agrees that the original intent was to protect the local farmers and keep the big producers from running out the local farmers.

Chairman Morrow asked for any further public comment, after hearing none he declared the public hearing closed at 10:07 A.M., and the Board went back into regular session.

Members of the Board had discussions:

Brummond – expressed concerns of losing control of zoning, but feels good about being able to leave the Program if they choose.



Burt County Board Minutes



Schold – feels that the County will have control to use the Program how we want - It's our choice

T.Connealy – feels we are not hindering farmers from starting, this is about getting people involved in the Livestock Industry

Newill – we could use the Program to look for those who want to invest in our County, that's not to say that just because we use this program, we aren't reaching out to beginning/small farmers. We want to work with any size, but this is a way to invest in our County

M.Connealy – concerned about the goals that are still there in the Legislature to take local control away. Burt County has already taken actions with our zoning history to show we are open for those interested in coming in. He feels the unknowns outweigh the benefits at this point.

Morrow – Livestock Operations have advantages for the local farmers.

Motion was made by Brummond to move forward with the Livestock Friendly Designation Process and have a Resolution prepared to be voted upon at the July 31, 2015 regularly scheduled board meeting. Newill seconded the motion, with roll call vote as follows: Ayes – Morrow, Schold, Brummond, T.Connealy and Newill. Nays – M.Connealy and Rogers.

After a short recess and relocating into the Boardroom on the 2nd floor, the Board **reviewed the budget requests for the 2015-2016 fiscal year and met with officials to discuss their budgets.** These discussions took place from 10:30 A.M. to a recess at 12:00 noon, and resuming again at 1:00 P.M. until adjournment of the meeting at 3:56 P.M. A meeting was set for Final decisions on the budget requests for July 20, 2015, to be held following the Board of Equalization, Protest Final Decisions.

ATTEST: SARAH J. FREIDEL
BURT COUNTY CLERK

CLIFFORD L. MORROW, CHAIRMAN
BURT COUNTY BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS

These minutes are not the official record and may be corrected. A copy of the approved official minutes is available to the public at the Clerk's Office